

A VISION OF THE KING

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A SERMON

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*"Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off."
Isaiah 33:17*

This morning [See Sermon #533, The Queen Of The South or The Earnest Enquirer] I spoke to you concerning the visit of the Queen of Sheba to King Solomon, and tried to use it as an illustration of the spirit in which sinners should come to Him who is far wiser and greater than Solomon. This evening I am going to continue in much the same strain while I try to speak to you, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, from the well-known words which I have just read in your hearing.

This passage is a rather difficult one to explain—at least certain expositors have done their best to make it appear to be so. They imagine that we have here a threatening that the Jews should be carried away to Nineveh as captives, and that in that far-off land they should see the Assyrian “king in his beauty.” But I venture to say that if you read our text in its connection, you will see that a threatening would be altogether out of place here in the midst of so many precious promises to the people of God. There is nothing but love and kindness for them—where there are threatenings, they are for their enemies.

It is possible that the historical setting of the text is this—that the Jews who had seen their king, Hezekiah, in his “day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy”—when Sennacherib’s vile letter had been brought to him, should live to see that same “king in his beauty” when the angel of the Lord had so mysteriously smitten the great host in the camp of the Assyrians, and Hezekiah had gone up to the house of the Lord to return public thanks for the miraculous deliverance which had been wrought in answer to prayer and in accordance with Isaiah’s prophecy.

But all students of Scripture must agree that “the king” here mentioned is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ—and that the promise of the text relates partly to the latter-day glory, and more fully and more gloriously to the saint’s experience in heaven—“Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.”

Without any further preface, I will try to direct your thoughts to these four things. First, *a King pre-eminent*. Secondly, *a vision predicted*. Thirdly, *a peculiar beauty*. And fourthly, *a land possessed*.

I. First, dear friends, we have plainly enough in the text, A KING PRE-EMINENT—“Thine eyes shall see *the King*.” No name is given and no name is needed. It is here as it was when the spouse began the Canticles by singing, “Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.” There was no need to say to whom she was referring, for the chaste bride wanted no kisses from anyone but her Beloved.

I am speaking to those who know the Lord, and therefore I say to them—You know, beloved, that *our Lord Jesus is King by right divine*. He is the brightness of His Father’s glory and the express image of His person. God has appointed Him heir of all things, and by Him God made the worlds. “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”

He “is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.” Well did the inspired prophet write concerning Him, “The government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be

called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.”

It is by His permission that other kings reign. And when He pleases, He can in a moment remove the mightiest monarchs from their throne. He is the only Sovereign who is King by right divine, the absolute Disposer of all events, to whom all power in heaven and earth has been given by His Father, in whose hands are the issues of life and death, and at whose belt hang the keys of the unseen world.

You remember too, beloved, that *our Lord Jesus Christ was a King even when He was upon the earth as a man*. He ruled over all the forces of nature. Stormy winds were hushed to sleep by His commanding word, “Peace; be still.” All diseases fled at His approach and the very demons proved that they too were under the control of His sovereign power. Even the king of terrors, Death himself, had to own the sway of the far mightier King of kings, and to yield up at His bidding those who had passed beneath the grim portals of his dread domains.

Yet how shamefully wicked men maltreated this mighty Monarch, before whom the holy angels had bowed in lowly obeisance, or waited on poised wing ready to fly on any errand on which He might deign to send them! You know the sad, sad story of the shameful indignities to which our King was subjected.

They hung a soldier’s coat around His shoulders in mockery of the imperial purple. They thrust a reed into His hand as a sham scepter, and for a crown they twisted cruel thorns that pierced His blessed brow as they smote Him again and yet again, and bowed the knee before Him in the mere semblance of adoration.

Yet there was a regal majesty about Him even when He was thus crowned King of grief. When Pilate asked Him the direct question, “Are you the King of the Jews?” He did not deny it. And even when He hung upon the cross as a condemned criminal, the official title set up above His head in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin was, “This is Jesus the King of the Jews.”

He was much more than that, for He was Lord of all men and all angels too, and He could, in an instant, have summoned all the shining legions above to come to His relief. But He resolved to go through to the bitter end with the great work He had undertaken—and to be both Prince and Savior to give repentance and remission of sins to all for whom, as the great Kingly Substitute, He was laying down His life.

*“To the shameful cross they nail’d Him,
And that cross became His throne:
In the tomb they laid and seal’d Him;
Lo the Savior bursts the stone,
And ascending,
Claims all empire as His own.”*

This same Jesus is now *King in heaven*. After His degradation came His exaltation. When He ascended up on high, leading captivity captive, He was welcomed back to His throne with royal honors. The twenty-fourth Psalm gives a graphic and poetic description of the royal reception accorded to Him—“Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory.”

This glorious King and Lord is also the Ruler in providence—nothing can happen without His knowledge and permission. It is true that His universal sovereignty is not yet recognized and that this Divine King is still “despised and rejected of men.” But the day is coming when He shall appear again upon this earth, and at the hour decreed from all eternity, He shall be acclaimed as “King of kings, and Lord of lords,” when “the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ: and He shall reign for ever and ever.”

What “His beauty” is now, and ever shall be, mortal mind cannot conceive and mortal tongue can never tell. When John saw Him, as the “Alpha and Omega, the first and the last,” he fell at His feet as dead. And when Paul “was caught up into paradise,” he “heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful (or possible) for a man to utter.” Probably we can best express our anticipation of seeing our “King in his beauty” by singing, with Dr. Watts,—

*“There, where my blessed Jesus reigns,
In heaven’s unmeasured space,
I’ll spend a long eternity
In pleasure and in praise.*

*“Millions of years my wondering eyes
Shall o’er Thy beauties rove;
And endless ages I’ll adore
The glories of Thy love.”*

I must not forget to remind you that *our Lord Jesus Christ is still King in His church on earth*. That is the true Established Church, for it is founded upon the rock and it is so firmly established that “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Christ’s church is a royal church, for it has a King—nay, more—the “King of kings” at the head of it. “The Lord reign” everywhere, but let us who are His loyal subjects especially set Him on high upon the throne of our hearts and—

*“Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all.”*

II. Now, secondly, we have A VISION PREDICTED—“Thine eyes shall see the King.”

Mark well that this is not a vision to be seen by you who have never looked to Christ by faith and who have never trusted to His precious blood to cleanse you from your sin. The sight of the glorified Savior is only for those who have looked upon the dishonored Savior hanging on the cross of Calvary—it is their eyes that “shall see the king in his beauty.”

And first, *this will be a near sight*. By faith we have had, as it were, a telescopic view of Christ, but we are yet to see Him face to face, and to talk with Him as we talk with a dear familiar friend. Even a distant sight of Him ravishes the heart, but oh! what must it be to see Him without a veil between us? We need not envy John who leaned his head upon his Master’s bosom, for we shall have closer communion with our glorified Lord than even the beloved apostle enjoyed while here below.

Then, changing only one consonant, *it will be a dear sight*, as well as a near sight. We shall look upon our heavenly Bridegroom with eyes shining with sinless love and we shall rejoice that He is our Husband, our Beloved, our All-in-All. I must leave your sanctified imagination to conceive what this sight must be, for I cannot possibly picture it for you.

I look upon a child and see some comeliness in it, but the child’s mother can see beauties that no stranger can perceive—the love of the heart adds to the appreciation of the eye. So is it with this near and dear vision of our King that is promised to the believer—“thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty.”—

*“Then shall I see, and hear, and know
All I desired or wished below;
And every power find sweet employ
In that eternal world of joy.”*

And further, as it will be a near and dear sight, *so will it also be an assured sight*. We often fancy that we see certain things, but we are not sure that we do see them. There is much here that tends to

cheat the eye and pervert the vision, but when we see Jesus as He is, it will be an assured sight about which there will be no possible question. No one of us will then have to ask—

*“Do I love the Lord, or no,
Am I His, or am I not?”*

We shall not then have to search and see whether our spot is the spot of God’s children, for we shall know even as we are known. And the King Himself shall say to us, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

And then, beloved, *it will be a satisfying sight*. There is no solid satisfaction in anything that the eye can see in this world. People say, “See Naples, and die,” but I have met many who have seen even that fair city and they have all wanted to live to see something more. Even Naples could not satisfy them. The most charming vision that sea, or land or even the starry sky can give, can never satisfy an immortal spirit.

But the believer in Jesus says with David, “I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.” When my “eyes shall see the king in his beauty,” my soul will exclaim, “It is enough, my Lord. My eyes have at last found the one object upon which they can rest forever. I am perfectly satisfied with You.”

Yet even the word *satisfying* cannot fully express all that this vision of the King will be, for *it will be a ravishing sight*, a rapturous, ecstatic, entrancing, transporting vision. I cannot find words that are adequate to describe this sight. One must see it to know how glorious it is. Heaven will be a place of many surprises, but the vision of our glorified King will astonish us forever.

We shall be amazed to all eternity that such a wondrous Being as God’s eternal Son could ever have loved such worthless worms as we are—that so glorious a King could have stooped so low as to take up for Himself our nature, and then that He should have been willing to endure for our sakes the death of the cross. That will be a marvel that we shall never be able to understand.

We shall also be surprised that we did not know Him more fervently and that we did not do, and dare, and even die for Him who had loved us so much that He did die for us. Perhaps some of us, now and then, have had such rapturous experiences that we have felt like the apostle Paul when he wrote, “whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell.” But the extraordinary seasons have never been permanent with any of us, and usually they have been very transient. Yet, up yonder it will be our normal ambition to be lost and swallowed up in a never-ending ravishing vision of our glorious and beauteous King.

I must not omit to remind you that *this will be an assimilating sight*. I don’t like that long word, but I mean that it will be a sight that will make us like Him upon whom we shall then be gazing. “We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” It is looking by faith to Christ that gives us any likeness to Him which we possess even now—but a clear view of our gracious “King in his beauty” shall transform us into a perfect likeness to Him. “In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren—and His brethren shall, ultimately, in all things be made like unto Him.

I will add only one more characteristic of this vision of Christ—*it will be an everlasting sight*. When our Sabbath services are over, some of you go out of the Tabernacle with heavy hearts. You have to go home to a sick household, perhaps to a persecuting husband or an ungodly wife. You are coming with us to the communion table and when you leave the assembly of the saints, you will have to go where you will cry with the psalmist, “Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!” I do not wonder that you sang with such heartiness just now,—

*“Oh when, thou city of my God,
Shall I thy courts ascend,
Where congregations ne’er break up,
And Sabbaths have no end?”*

Ah, well! that everlasting *Sabbatismos*—that eternal keeping of Sabbath may be nearer than you think. And when once you enter into that blessed state, you will remain in it forever. “Thine eyes,” my poor brother or sister, “shall see the king in his beauty,” and you shall never lose that rapturous vision.

III. Time fails me, so I must go on to the third point, A BEAUTY PECULIAR—“Thine eyes shall see the king *in his beauty*.”

Now, the “beauty” of a king consists, first, *in his person*, so you shall see the beauty of Christ’s person. It is delightful to think of the priestly, prophetic, and royal offices of our Lord Jesus Christ, but our choicest meditations must ever cluster around His blessed person. All His garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia. His name is as ointment poured forth, but He Himself is “altogether lovely.”

It is no phantom, no shadow at which we are to look, but we are to see the King Himself—that King who once was the babe in Bethlehem, the carpenter at Nazareth—who went about doing good, preaching the Gospel, healing the sick, raising the dead, feeding the fainting multitudes—that same Jesus who agonized in Gethsemane and died on Calvary—this is the King whom we are to see in all the glory of His combined deity and humanity, very God of very God, yet just as truly man.

The “beauty” of a king also consists in part *in the glory of his official robes and jewels and ornaments*. “Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty—not as men saw Him when His ruby robe was formed from His own blood, when His only diamonds were His tears or the flashing of His eyes in pity for His foes, and when the only crown He wore was made of thorns.

Pilate mockingly said to the Jews, “Behold your king!” But the heavenly heralds, with sound of trumpet, will cry to the saints in a far different fashion, “Behold your King!” and they shall behold Him “crowned with glory and honour.” On His head shall be many crowns—the crowns which His Father has given Him, the crowns which He has won from His enemies, the crowns which shall be cast at His feet to tell of His universal sovereignty—and they shall see Him “clothed with a vesture dipped in blood...and on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords.”—

*“Sinners in decision crown’d Him,
Mocking thus the Savior ’s claim;
Saints and angels crowd around Him,
Own His title, praise His name;
Crown Him, Crown Him;
Spread abroad the Victor’s fame.*

*“Hark! Those bursts of acclamation!
Hark! Those loud triumphant chords!
Jesus takes the highest station:
Oh what joy the sight affords!
Crown Him, crown Him,
‘King of kings, and Lord of lords.’”*

Again, a king’s “beauty” consists *in the trophies that tell of his triumphs*. When kings return from their wars, they delight in displaying the flags that have been captured from their foes, or the prisoners and other tokens of victory by which they are surrounded. In the olden days, the great warrior kings would have their stricken foes chained to their triumphal chariots, or marching as slaves in the victor’s possession.

And the Lord has given to Christ the necks of His enemies and they will gladly grace His triumphal procession, for they are captives who have been made willing in the day of His power and who, strangely enough, share in the glory of His triumph, for they are now His friends, His brethren, with whom He delights to divide all that He has.

Further, the “beauty” of a king sometimes consists *in the splendor of his court and the excellence of his courtiers*, and our eyes are to see our King in His beauty surrounded by “a great multitude, which no

man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues...clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands,” crying with a loud voice, “Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.” “These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

Beside these sinners saved by grace, there will be the innumerable host of holy angels who have never sinned and who all yield unflinching obedience to our great Lord and King. What a sublime spectacle it will be when the great Commander-in-Chief shall have the whole army of the redeemed gathered before Him for the final review—not one soldier of the cross missing, not one dead, or wounded, or captured by the enemy, but all of them more than conquerors through Him that has loved them! May you and I, beloved, be among them!

*“With them numbered may we be,
Now and through eternity!”*

IV. Now I close with but a brief mention of A LAND POSSESSED.

Read the text thus, “the land that is very far off” *from sinners*. They look upon this world as something that is present to their senses, but they regard the world to come as so “very far off” that it hardly seems to concern them at all. They take no more interest in the “land that is very far off” than a poor ploughman in a country village takes in some Republic in South America of which he has only heard the name.

They know no more about heaven than swine know about the stars in the firmament, perhaps not as much, for the swine can see the stars, but heaven is “very far off” from sinners so long as they remain in their sins. Yet if they will but leave their sins and look to Jesus in all the beauty of His substitutionary sacrifice for the guilty, that far-off land shall be brought very near to them and in God’s good time they shall enter it and abide there forever and ever.

Sometimes, heaven is “the land that is very far off” *from the doubting Christian*, so that he fears that he shall never get there. He dreams of a rough road that has no end, or cries out that he has no hope of escaping from the Slough of Despond. Yet, to a believer in Jesus, heaven is not “very far off.” Nay, it is so near that he may be there before I have finished my sermon, or even before I have finished this sentence.

*‘One gentle sigh, the fetter breaks:
We scarce can say, ‘He’s gone.’
Before the willing spirit takes
Her mansion near the throne.”*

Do not fret about tomorrow. You may be in heaven before tomorrow. Even if we have to abide here a while—

*“Though in a foreign land
We are not far from home;
And nearer to our house above
We every moment come.”*

I find that the marginal reading is “the land of far distances.” Heaven is a land of magnificent distances, where there shall be abundant room for the multitude that no man can number and where in all things, even in the number of the saved, Christ shall have the pre-eminence. Shall Satan capture the most of men? I do not believe that he will—if he could do so, he would have the pre-eminence, but that can never be. Christ “shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.”

But do you think that a small number of souls saved would satisfy Him? Would that be a fitting sequel to His soul-travail? Oh, no! I believe in a great heaven and a great multitude of great sinners

saved by the great sacrifice of the great Savior, who shall bring great glory to His great name and the great grace of the great Father, Son, and Spirit forever and ever!

But my dear hearer, however great it all is, of what avail will it be to you if you do not have a share in it? My text says, “*Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.*” That applies to every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, is that what *you* are? If so, my text is a promise to you as surely as if your own name had been mentioned in it.

If you will now believe in Jesus, if you will trust Him, if you will rely upon Him—it all means the same thing—this promise is for you and it shall be fulfilled in your experience in God’s own time. May God the Holy Spirit give you the grace to turn your eyes by faith to the Lamb of God who died for sinners upon the cross of Calvary. And then to you, even to you, I can repeat the promise of the text, “*Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land of far distances.*” The Lord grant it, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

REVELATION 7:9-17; ISAIAH 49

Revelation 7:9. *After this.*

I thought I would read this familiar and very precious passage once more as so many of our number have gone home to heaven during the past few weeks. There has been a great flight of the Lord’s doves upward to the heavenly dovecotes lately. We will think of them as we read these well-known words—“After this”—

9. I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

Their purity is indicated by the white robes in which they were clothed and possibly also their royal priesthood, while their victory over all their foes is typified by the palms which they held in their hands. Montgomery was right when he wrote,—

*“Palms of glory, raiment bright,
Crowns that never fade away,
Gird and deck the saints in light,
Priests, and kings, and conquerors they.”*

10. And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb.

They all sing one song and it is the same song that we sing on earth, “Salvation to our God.” They know nothing up in heaven of any salvation by the works of the law or by human merits. Oh, no! They sing, “Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.”

11-12. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

You see that all the glory is given to God—man is lost sight of—humanitarianism has no place of honor in heaven, though many, nowadays, make so much of it here on earth. It is unto Father, Son, and Spirit—unto the one and only Creator, Savior, Inspirer that the angels ascribe “blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might...for ever and ever.”

13-17. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are

they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. [See Sermon #1316, Why the Heavenly Robes Are White] Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. [See Sermons #643, No Tears in Heaven; #1800, Heaven Below; and #2128, Heaven Above and Heaven Below]

This is a vision of the heavenly life above. I want you to keep the last two verses in your minds, for we shall presently meet with very similar expressions in a place where, perhaps, you would scarcely have expected to find them—and there you will see that those expressions are used concerning the heavenly life below as here they are used concerning the heavenly life above.

Turn to the Book of the prophet Isaiah, the forty-ninth chapter, and there you will read a passage which brings us back to earth. It takes us from the Lamb in the midst of the throne in heaven to the Lamb amidst the despising and rejecting sons of men. It is our Lord Jesus Christ who is here speaking—

Isaiah 49:1-3. *Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me; And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.*

Our Lord became, by His incarnation—by His very birth so marvelous and mysterious—He became that Servant of JEHOVAH by whom God would be glorified. He was, as it were, hidden away, like a sword in its master's scabbard—concealed and protected, like an arrow hidden in its owner's quiver—until the time came for God to use Him, and then God did use Him both as a sharp sword and as a polished shaft.

4. *Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God.*

The Jews, as a nation, were not gathered unto Christ. The highly favored people, as a whole, did not believe in Him. He was expressly sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, yet John was obliged to write, “He came unto his own and his own received him not.” So few became His personal followers that it really appeared as if His life-work had been a failure, but He did what all God's true servants must do—He referred His work to the Lord. He said, “Surely my judgment is with the LORD, and my work (or My record) with my God.”

If we are faithful, that is all that our gracious Master requires of us—we are none of us bound to be successful. If we bear our sincere testimony to the truth, and everybody rejects it, our reward will be none the less in the day when the Lord calls us to give an account of our stewardship. If you, my brother or my sister, are loyal and true to Him whose servant you are, when your Lord comes again, He will say to you, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant...enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

5-6. *And now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength. And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.*

Though Jesus seemed to fail with the Jews, He has succeeded in a far greater measure with the Gentiles, for great multitudes of them have gladly accepted Him as their Savior.

7-8. *Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee. Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee:*

JEHOVAH will bless His Anointed, He will accomplish His great purposes of love and mercy through Him.

8-9. *And I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people,* [See Sermon #103, Christ in the Covenant] *to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves.* [See Sermon #2397, “Out of Darkness Into Light”]

This is Christ’s work today, to call out the forgotten ones who are hidden away in the *oubliettes* of the Bastille of Despair. He comes and calls them, “Go forth...shew yourselves.” And at His bidding they appear, even as Lazarus came forth from the grave at His command.

Now listen—this is what becomes of those who come out of sin’s prison at Christ’s call. They become His sheep—

9. *They shall feed in the ways,—*

On their way to the one great fold on the hilltops of glory, they shall find suitable and sufficient pasture—“They shall feed in the ways,”

9-10. *And their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.*

Now recall those verses from the Revelation that we read just now, and note what blessings the good Shepherd has prepared for His sheep even while they are upon this earth.

11-13. *And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted. Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim. Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath comforted his people,* [See Sermon #3012, God Comforting His People]

Well may heaven and earth and mountains sing when they have such a theme for their songs as this.

13-14. *And will have mercy upon his afflicted. But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my LORD hath forgotten me.*

Zion said so, but it was not true. Hear what the Lord says—

15-16. *Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.* [See Sermons #512, A Precious Drop of Honey and #2672, Neither Forsaken Nor Forgotten]

However unnatural an earthly mother may prove to be, God will never forsake or forget one of His children—

*“‘Yet,’ saith the Lord, ‘should nature change,
And mothers monsters prove,
Sion still dwells upon the heart
Of everlasting love.’”*

16-21. *Thy walls are continually before me. Thy children shall make haste; thy destroyers and they that made thee waste shall go forth of thee. Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together, and come to thee. As I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee, as a bride doeth. For thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, shall even now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away. The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell. Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been?* [See Sermons #2692, Church Increase and #2776, The Church a Mother]

Oh, that we might often have such a glad surprise as this and be made to marvel at the Lord’s gracious dealings with us!

22-26. *Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me. Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? But thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children. And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.*

The enemies of the Lord's people are His enemies too, and He will overthrow them in His own good time, and make the whole world know that He is their Savior and Redeemer, "the mighty One of Jacob."

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